GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:32
ANSWERED ON:02.03.2005
RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY BANGLADESH
Yerrannaidu Shri Kinjarapu

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Bangladesh has imposed certain restrictions to carry Gas from Myanmar to West Bengal through its territory unless India allows Bangladesh to import electricity from Nepal and Bhutan;

(b) If so, the details in this regard;

(c) Whether the Union Government proposes to sign an agreement with Bangladesh in this regard; and

(d) If so, the current status of the said issue?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) to (d): A statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in parts (a) to (d) of the reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 32 to be answered on 02.03.2005 regarding `Restrictions imposed by Bangladesh`.

(a) to (d) Following the meeting of the energy Ministers of India, Bangladesh and Myanmar in Yangon on January 11-13, 2005, a trilateral press statement was issued which stated that Myanmar natural gas would be exported to India by pipeline through the territory of Bangladesh to be operated by an International consortium as may be agreed upon by the parties concerned.

On the sidelines of the Tripartite Conference, the Bangladesh Minister of Energy and Mineral resources raised the following issues relating to bilateral cooperation viz

(i) Transmission of hydro-electricity from Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh through Indian territory;

(ii) A Corridor for supply of commodities between Nepal and Bhutan and Bangladesh through Indian territory; and

(iii) To take necessary measures to reduce trade imbalance between the two countries.

In respect of these issues, the Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas stated in a bilateral press statement that:-

(i) With regard to Bangladesh`s request for the provision of electricity facilities from Nepal and Bhutan to Bangladesh, the Indian Minister agreed that the Government of India would examine positively any fresh proposals received from Bangladesh in regard to examining required facilities.

(ii) In regard to Bangladesh`s request for transit facilities to Bhutan and Nepal through India between Bangladesh on one side and Bhutan and Nepal on the other, the Indian Minister conveyed that the Government of India supported this request. He pointed out that some facilities had already been provided at Phulbari, which at present were not being fully utilized. He conveyed that the Government of India would favourably examine any further requests that might arise to augment existing facilities.

(iii) With regard to Bangladesh`s request for rectifying the imbalance of trade, the Indian Minister agreed with the need to expand bilateral trade between the two countries in order to bridge the trade gap that exists at present. Projects such as proposed at the Trilateral Conference will contribute to this objective.

The three governments have also agreed to set up a techno-commercial working committee to discuss various issues, including the route that the pipeline would take. The first meeting of the Techno- Commercial Working Committee took place in Yangon on 24-25 February 2005.